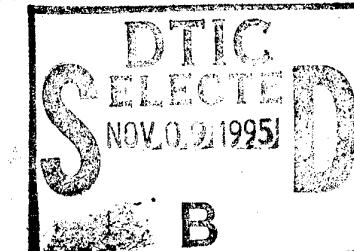


AR-009-337

DSTO-TN-0014

Conceptual Study on Replacing the
Raven Back Pack Radio Batteries with
a Solid Polymer Fuel Cell

Gregory A. Clark



19951108 083

© Commonwealth of Australia

Approved for Public Release

THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL
TECHNICAL INFORMATION SERVICE
IS AUTHORISED TO
REPRODUCE AND SELL THIS REPORT

Conceptual Study on Replacing the Raven Back Pack Radio Batteries with a Solid Polymer Fuel Cell

Gregory A. Clark

Ship Structures and Materials Division
Aeronautical and Maritime Research Laboratory

DSTO-TN-0014

ABSTRACT

A conceptual study has demonstrated the technical possibility of replacing the RAVEN radio batteries with a solid polymer electrolyte fuel cell. The fuel cell would operate on air and stored hydrogen released from a metal hydride. The study revealed that the fuel cell power source offered logistical benefits over nickel cadmium batteries and potential cost savings over lithium sulphur dioxide batteries. The study suggests that methods of chemically generating hydrogen and oxygen should be investigated as they may provide significant increased power and energy density for such fuel cell power systems.

RELEASE LIMITATION

Approved for public release

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

DEFENCE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 5

Published by

*DSTO Aeronautical and Maritime Research Laboratory
PO Box 4331
Melbourne Victoria 3001*

*Telephone: (03) 9626 8111
Fax: (03) 9626 8999
© Commonwealth of Australia 1995
AR No. AR-009-337
August 1995*

APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

Conceptual Study on Replacing the Raven Back Pack Radio Batteries with a Solid Polymer Fuel Cell

Executive Summary

A study has been undertaken into the feasibility of replacing the Raven back pack radio batteries with a conceptual solid polymer electrolyte fuel cell (SPEFC). The results of the study were:-

- It would be possible to build a SPEFC using metal hydride storage technology to replace the existing nickel cadmium and lithium sulphur dioxide batteries.
- The fuel cell system would be about the same size of the 4 Ah NiCd battery but would supply twice the energy storage for about the same mass of battery.
- The SPEFC design could provide the same energy storage as the LiSO₂ battery but with a weight penalty of 2.75 kg over the LiSO₂ but only a weight penalty of 0.54 kg over the NiCd battery whilst providing 3 times the energy of the NiCd.
- The SPEFC did provide significant benefits for patrol logistics when compared to the NiCd battery whilst also providing a 120 cc of potable water each day.
- The SPEFC system was more complex than a battery but existing technology would be able to provide a highly reliable system.
- The study revealed that the largest weight contribution was from the hydride storage and that alternate hydrogen storage techniques such as sodium boron hydride and calcium hydride should be investigated.
- The study also suggested that the successful development of a SPEFC system could offer cost savings to the ADF.
- Further investigations should also consider the possibility of using a chemical store of oxygen rather than using air. Such operation would likely improve power density and it would remove the need for an air intake that needs protection against dust and water ingestion.

Accession For	
NTIS GRA&I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DTIC TAB	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unannounced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Justification	
By _____	
Distribution/ _____	
Availability Codes _____	
Dist	Avail and/or Special
A1	

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. FUEL CELL TECHNOLOGY	1
3. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN OF THE FUEL CELL SYSTEM	2
4. DESIGN FEATURES AND CALCULATIONS.....	4
4.1 Current Battery Specifications.....	4
4.2 Fuel Cell Specifications	5
4.3 Conceptual Layout for Fuel Cell System.....	6
4.4 Hydrogen Storage Calculations	7
4.5 Hydride Storage.....	8
4.6 Gas Consumption and Energy Stored in Cylinder.....	8
4.7 Fuel Cell Size Calculation	9
4.8 DC-DC Converter.....	9
4.9 Water Balance Calculations	10
5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	10
6. CONCLUSIONS	13
7. REFERENCES.....	14
8. ADDENDUM	16
APPENDIX	17

1. Introduction

This report presents a conceptual study on replacing the nickel cadmium (NiCd) and lithium sulphur dioxide (LiSO_2) batteries used in the Raven radio of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) with a solid polymer electrolyte fuel cell (SPEFC) system. The current batteries are expensive and divided into essentially two functions. The NiCd batteries are secondary batteries with approximately twice the mass and nominally half the electrical capacity of the LiSO_2 batteries. They are used for short patrols and training and in comparison to the LiSO_2 , they are very cost effective because of their recharge capability. However, for long patrols and wartime situations the LiSO_2 would preferably be used due to their superior performance and the less demanding load carrying requirement for the soldiers. Unfortunately the LiSO_2 is a primary battery which means that once discharged it has to be disposed of. SPEFC's offer the possibility of a single source of power for the Raven radio that would provide a quick recharge capability with an energy storage equal to or greater than the LiSO_2 with a commensurate low operating cost.

2. Fuel Cell Technology

A fuel cell is an electrochemical device similar to a battery in that the combination of chemicals will produce direct current (DC) power. In a fuel cell the oxidant and the fuel are stored and supplied to the electrodes of the fuel cell externally whereas a battery consumes chemicals stored internally. Subsequently, fuel cells can supply electric power indefinitely provided the fuel and oxidant supplies are maintained. Typical open circuit cell voltages are 1-2 Volts depending on the type of fuel cell. Higher voltages are obtained by stacking multiples of the cells together in series and higher currents are achieved by increasing the cross-sectional area of the cell or connecting them in parallel.

Most fuel cells use oxygen or air as the oxidant and hydrogen is generally the fuel. Fuel cells can achieve quite high efficiencies in the production of DC power as the process is not limited by the Carnot cycle. Subsequently, power generation efficiencies between 50% and 70% are possible and system efficiencies can be greater than 80% if waste heat is utilised [1]. In addition, the power generation within the cell is silent like a battery.

There are a number of fuel cell technologies existing today. The most prominent forms are phosphoric acid fuel cells (PAFC), solid polymer electrolyte (SPEFC), alkaline (AFC) and solid oxide (SOFC), all of which are in various states of development. This report deals with SPEFC's which operate from room temperature to 90°C. SPEFC's use a solid polymer electrolyte membrane which has a porous electrical conductor (commonly graphite paper or cloth) bonded to each surface. A catalyst (commonly Platinum) is interposed between the membrane and the conductor. Hydrogen gas molecules entering the cell are ionised at catalyst sites into two hydrogen ions. The

electrons stripped from the hydrogen molecule flow through the load to the anode side of the cell. The hydrogen ions diffuse through the electrolyte membrane to the anode where they interact with oxygen molecules at catalyst sites to form pure water (Fig 1). The normal operating voltage of a SPEFC is typically about 0.7 volt (~1 V open circuit) reducing down to a practical minimum of 0.5 volt. The half reaction and full reaction equations are shown below.

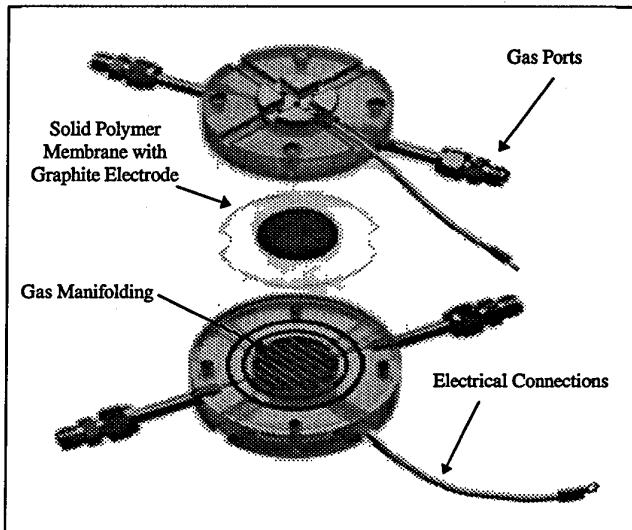
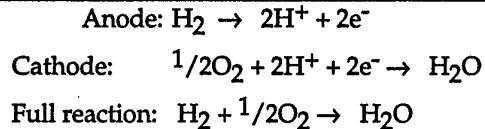


Figure 1. Picture of an Experimental Single Cell Solid Polymer Electrolyte Fuel Cell used at AMRL.

3. Conceptual Design of the Fuel Cell System

In designing a conceptual fuel cell system to replace the Raven batteries the following criteria were set:-

- Electrical capacity to be at least equal to the LiSO₂ batteries, ie. 8 Ah.
- Size to be no greater than the largest of the NiCd batteries.
- Mass to be no greater than the largest of the NiCd batteries, ie. 3.7 kg.

Figure 2 shows a diagram of the conceptual SPEFC system. The system uses stored hydrogen fuel and air as the oxidant. A small DC electric fan blows air through the fuel cell and H₂ is stored as a metal hydride in a stainless steel cylinder. The air must flow through the fuel cell stack otherwise there would be a build up of nitrogen within the stack as the oxygen is consumed. The H₂ flow to the stack is "dead-ended" meaning that the H₂ does not exit the stack. It is all consumed in situ and replaced by maintaining a constant pressure in the stack from a pressurised source of H₂.

A metal hydride was chosen as the means of storage because of its simplicity, safety and higher storage density¹ in comparison to more traditional methods such as compressed H₂ gas or liquid H₂. In addition, liquid H₂ would be a logistical nightmare due to its cryogenic nature. In the case of a bullet piercing a hydride bottle there would inevitably be a loud noise and hydrogen gas² contained within the bottle would vent under high pressure from the bottle. Testing with high velocity bullets has shown[10] that it is not possible for an explosion to occur due to the sponge nature of the hydride.

To desorb the H₂ stored within the metal hydride, it is heated by the ambient air and waste heat from the fuel cell. The H₂, which is very pure from a hydride, and the oxygen within the air are consumed within the fuel cell stack where DC power is generated and pure water is produced. Some of the product water is wicked into the stack to humidify the incoming gases. Because the fuel cell voltage varies according to the load drawn from the fuel cell, the electrical output from the stack is converted by a compact DC-DC converter to a fixed output voltage suitable for the radio.

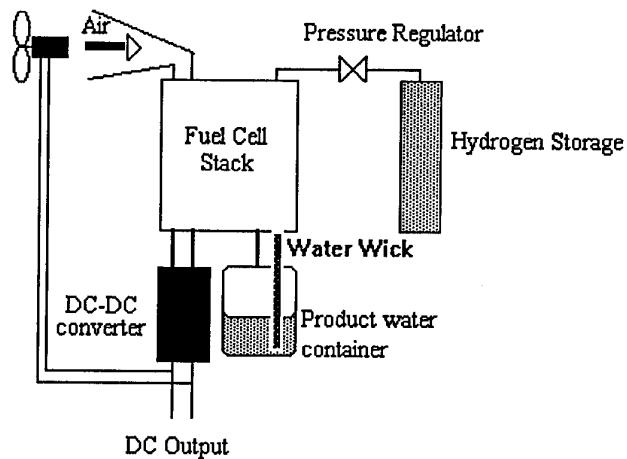


Figure 2. System diagram for conceptual SPEFC to replace Raven batteries.

¹ A metal hydride will typically store H₂ at a greater density than liquid H₂

² Hydrogen gas will exist in equilibrium with the hydrogen gas dissolved within the metal hydride. The amount of hydrogen gas will depend on free volume and the thermodynamics of the metal hydride.

In designing and costing the conceptual unit, existing commercial equipment was chosen wherever possible and retail prices were used. The fuel cell stack itself was not available for purchase off the shelf. Accordingly, the design was based on technology currently being used in larger commercial units. The performance parameters were also obtained from existing fuel cell systems. Costing of components used within the fuel cell stack used retail prices.

4. Design Features and Calculations

The following sections describe the specifications and calculations used in a spreadsheet calculation for the conceptual model of the fuel cell system. The spread sheet is detailed in the Appendix.

4.1 Current Battery Specifications

The existing batteries used for the Raven radio and ancillary equipment consists of NiCd batteries that are rechargeable and a LiSO₂ battery that offers double the capacity of the NiCd but is not rechargeable. The batteries considered in this report concern the larger of the NiCd and the LiSO₂ battery. The mechanical and the electrical details are listed below.

NiCd capacity is	118	Wh
LiSO ₂ capacity is	238	Wh

Note: LiSO₂ battery is approximately half the size of NiCd.

	NiCd	LiSO ₂
Nominal battery capacity	118 Wh	236 Wh
Normal mission life on patrol ³	12 hours	36 hours

Note: Although the NiCd battery is half the nominal capacity of the LiSO₂ it only produces one third of the normal mission life according to reference [2]. No explanation for this reduction in mission life was given. NiCd batteries do suffer from self discharge [3] but this would not be a probable cause for such a difference in mission life. Subsequently, the actual useable capacity of the NiCd when used in the Raven radio is one third of the LiSO₂ battery, viz 78.7 Wh. This was the capacity used in comparison with the conceptual fuel cell system.

Max required battery power is 141.6 Watts
 Maximum current drain on either battery is 4.8 Amps

³ Based on continuous use with a 1:9 transmit/receive ratio [4]

Figure 3 displays a photo of the NiCd battery and Table 1 lists the specifications of the 4 Ah NiCd and 8 Ah LiSO₂ batteries in the ADF inventory for the Raven backpack radio.

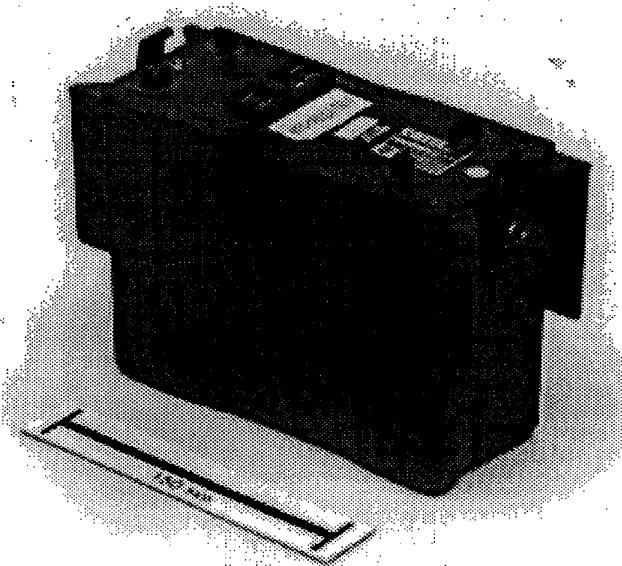


Figure 3. Photograph of the Raven 4 Ah NiCd battery.

Maximum Voltage of either battery is 29.5 volts, however an allowance is made in the radio to operate up to 32 Volts when in the receive state (light load) for the benefit of the higher voltage from the LiSO₂ battery. Sustained current drain on the batteries is typically 100-200 mA with a transmit current (averaged over a period of a few seconds) of 1.5-2.5 A with peaks up to 4.8 A required for Morse code or single sideband operation [4].

Table 1. Parameters of the Raven Back Pack Batteries [4].

	Nominal capacity (Ah)	Mass (kg)	Size (l*h*w) (mm)	Operating Voltage (DC)	Number of Recharge Cycles
NiCd	4	3.7	216*82*146	18-29.5	200 [2]
LiSO ₂	8	1.5	218*82.5*91	18-32	0

4.2 Fuel Cell Specifications

A baseline on performance characteristics for the model was established from the performance of the AMRL fuel cell stack manufactured by Energy Partners (EP). This fuel cell stack requires 60 l/min of H₂ flow at 5 kW when operating with pure O₂ and

H_2 . However, the EP stack uses the Nafion 117 membrane manufactured by Du Pont which is a relatively old membrane technology. A higher performing membrane is NE105 5L, also manufactured by the Du Pont chemical company. With this membrane there would be a 75% increase in power with the same amount of gas. It was assumed for this report that the NE 105 5L membrane would be used. However, only 50% more power from the fuel cell was assumed, meaning the required H_2 flow was 8 l/min/kW. However, any SPEFC replacement for the Raven battery would operate off air, not pure oxygen, and unfortunately the fuel cell performance is reduced due to the lower concentration of O_2 . The EP stack produces approximately half the power with air operation so a factor of 60% reduction with air as the oxidant was used in this report. This meant the H_2 flow required increased to 20 l/min/kW.

Table 2. Power and Current Densities at typical Operating Cell Voltages.

Cell Voltage Volts	Current Density A/cm ²	Power Density W/cm ²
0.5	0.8	0.4
0.6	0.6	0.36
0.7	0.25	0.175

The operating voltage of the fuel cell will decrease as the power output is increased. Typical operating voltages for each cell in a stack are between 0.5 and 0.7 Volts. Known SPEFC performance on Air/ H_2 is given in Table 2 for operation at 1/1 atm pressure. Because the voltage must be at a nominal 29.5 volts for the radio, the output of the fuel cell would be converted by a DC-DC converter to the required voltage. These converters typically have an 85% efficiency [5] but an efficiency of 80% was used for the report. This meant the fuel cell stack would have to produce a maximum power output of 177 W.

It should be noted that the fuel cell will deliver at the very least the full electrical capacity stored in the H_2 . In fact, with a 1:9 transmit:receive ratio the fuel cell system will deliver more than the nominal energy because at low loads (receive mode) it will be operating at a higher efficiency, possibly as much as 10% higher⁴.

4.3 Conceptual Layout for Fuel Cell System

Figure 4 shows the conceptual layout of the fuel cell system to replace the Raven battery. The size was based on the larger of the NiCd batteries. The largest of the system components that also has the greatest mass, is the stainless steel (SS) bottle containing the metal hydride. This bottle has to be robust to withstand the internal pressures generated as the H_2 is desorbed from the metal matrix. It must also be

⁴ A fuel cell stack manufactured by Siemens of Germany will operate on pure O_2 at 59% efficiency at rated load and 69% at 20% load[1]. This fuel cell uses the old technology membrane Nafion 117.

thermally conducting to absorb heat from the atmosphere and the fuel cell. The bottle is attached by a double-ended shut off connector to a compact fixed-pressure regulator. This item would need to be designed for the system as existing units available are quite large and massive. Discussions with a regulator designer [6] suggest that it would be possible to reduce the regulator size down to a size not much bigger than a match box. The diameter of the regulator was set at 50 mm for this report and is generally based on a commercial unit [7].

Items not able to be purchased off the shelves include:-

- The gas bottle and the associated connector: Both would use existing technology.
- The fuel cell: It would use the current state of the art technology involving printed membranes and moulded graphite plates.
- Encapsulated DC-DC converter: This would use existing technology but specifically designed for the unit. Efficiency would be between 85-90% based on current technology [5].
- The case: It would be based on the existing casing of the batteries.
- Valves for stopping water ingress into the unit: The air manifold for the fuel cell would need to be designed to stop any ingestion of water into the fuel cell.

4.4 Hydrogen Storage Calculations

The hydride/gas bottle was designed with walls 3 mm thick with a potential maximum diameter no greater than the external dimensions of the case (82 mm). With the maximum diameter of 82 mm, the bottle had maximum pressure rating⁵ of 16 MPa (2268 Psi). Assuming spherical end caps, this gave a maximum internal volume of 1.56 litres.

Before the H₂ storage volume of the bottle could be calculated, a number of design details needed to be addressed. These were:-

- One third of the bottle volume is occupied by gaseous hydrogen and two thirds by the metal hydride because the metal hydride is required to be in a porous form to ease absorption and desorption. This means there would always be some gaseous hydrogen immediately available for use in the fuel cell.
- In the remaining two thirds of the bottle's volume that contains the metal hydride, only two thirds of that volume will actually be occupied by the hydride due to heat conductors and packaging of the hydride to allow for expansion⁶.

The DC-DC converter will transform the variable fuel cell DC output⁷ to the desired 29.5 V with a maximum output current of 4.8 A. Such converters would also have

⁵ Using thin wall pressure vessel calculations based on tensile strength for stainless steel of 198 MPa.

⁶ Typical expansion of the metal matrix with the formation of the hydride is approximately 25%.

short circuit current and thermal overload protection. They can also have very good reliability having mean-time-between-failure (MTBF) as high as 500,000 to 1,000,000 hrs[5].

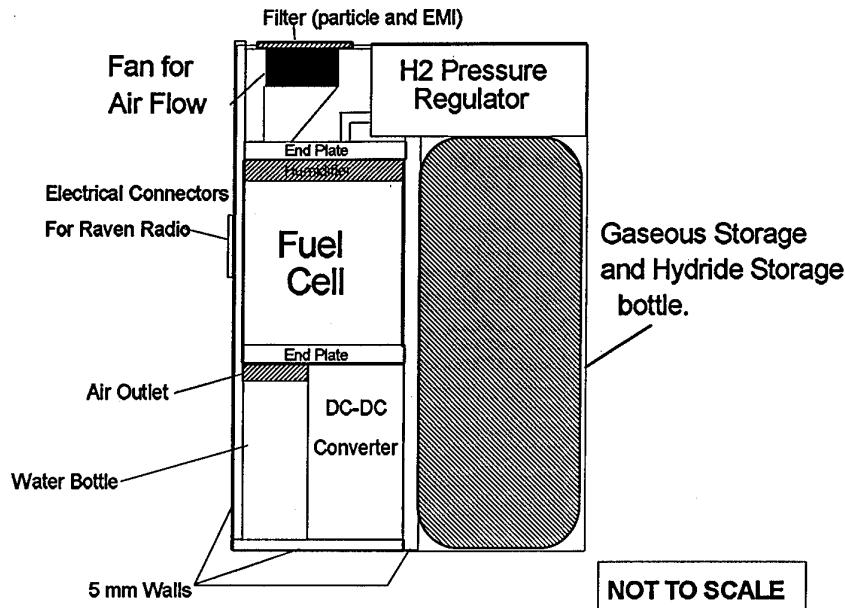


Figure 4. Conceptual Layout of Fuel Cell System.

4.5 Hydride Storage

The hydride, FeTiH_2 was chosen because amongst existing hydrides it stores a relatively high weight percentage of H_2 within it. It also desorbs at room temperature and is readily available at a reasonable price. It will store the equivalent of 1.3 times liquid H_2 in a given volume⁸. Ninety percent of this factor was used in the report.

The volume of gaseous H_2 stored was calculated from 60% of the maximum pressure rating for the bottle and one third of the bottle's volume.

4.6 Gas Consumption and Energy Stored in Cylinder

To obtain the required output power of 177 W the fuel cell stack will need 3.54 litre/min of H_2 which when divided into the total H_2 storage, will give the total

⁷ Fuel cell voltages fall as output power increases.

⁸ Liquid H_2 is 845 times denser than gaseous H_2 at STP.

operating time at maximum power and subsequently the electrical capacity of the fuel cell system.

4.7 Fuel Cell Size Calculation

The maximum width of the fuel cell was determined from the remaining space in the casing after walls and the bottle diameter had been deducted. Similarly, the maximum height of the fuel cell was the height of the casing minus two walls. The active cross-sectional area of the membrane in the fuel cell was 10 mm thinner than the width of the fuel cell and 20 mm shorter than the height. Twenty millimetres was used in the height calculation to allow for internal gas manifolding within the fuel cell stack. This internal manifolding of the gases is typical of modern commercial fuel cells and the 20 mm spacing would also allow for bolts needed to clamp the cells together.

Table 3 shows the number of cell plates and humidifier plates were needed for the operating voltages of 0.5, 0.6 and 0.7 V.

Table 3. Numbers of Cell and Humidifier Plates in Stack.

Cell Operating Voltage	Number of Cell Plates ⁹	No. of Humidifier Plates
0.5	11	4
0.6	12	5
0.7	23	8

The incoming gases must be humidified and as a rule of thumb, the oxygen side of the cells requires one fifth the total number of fuel cells for humidification and the H₂ needs one seventh. These numbers were rounded up to the nearest integral. The design used moulded graphite cell plates¹⁰ 2.5 mm thick with stiff end plates 4 mm thick.

4.8 DC-DC Converter

A review of DC-DC converter technology shows that encapsulated converters have long MTBFs and high transformed energy density. Figures quoted by Powerbox [5] are 36 Watts /cubic inch which translates to 2.08W/cc. This figure was used to calculate the volume needed to fit the DC-DC converter. The DC-DC converter was

⁹ Rounded up to the nearest whole number.

¹⁰ The Energy Partners fuel cell uses moulded graphite cell plates. Such plates can be made cheaply and efficiently.

mounted next to the hydride bottle so its waste heat could be used to desorb the H₂. The DC-DC regulator would also have an output for running the small quiet fan.

4.9 Water Balance Calculations

As mentioned previously, the fuel cell needs water for humidification. This water would need to be carried if the fuel cell stack does not produce enough for its own use.

Using the following equation¹¹ for the partial pressure (Atm) of water in 100% saturated gas [8] it is possible to determine the water requirement for humidification of the cells.

$$P(\text{sat}) = (377.4016 - 2.3147T + 0.003744T^2)/14.696 \quad (1)$$

Using T = 60°C (333.15°K) a P(sat) of 0.20 Atm (19,850 Pa) is obtained. This is the partial pressure of the moisture in the 100% saturated gas. From Ballard results[8], the H₂ stream must be 50% saturated at the operating temperature and the air must be 100% saturated at the same temperature.

5. Results and Discussion

By adjusting the size of the hydride bottle diameter it was possible to obtain a number of mass and capacity combinations. It did not prove feasible to fully satisfy the design criteria. To obtain a SPEFC system with the same capacity as the LiSO₂ battery required an extra 0.57 kg more mass than the NiCd battery. However, for the same mass as the NiCd battery, 110% extra electrical capacity could be carried in the SPEFC system. To obtain an electrical capacity the same as the LiSO₂ battery, the SPEFC system needed to be 0.57 kg heavier than the NiCd battery (2.77 kg heavier than the LiSO₂ bat). Table 4 lists a range of results¹².

¹¹ This equation appears to only produce reliable answers around 60°C.

¹² One feature not considered in the energy storage of the hydride system was the transmit to receive ratio of 1:9. In a low power receive mode the efficiency of the fuel cell may be 10% or more higher due to the lower power drain. Subsequently there would be a significant increase in the electrical capacity of the system if the 1:9 ratio was considered. In addition, the fuel cell system should be able to supply full power continuously without affecting the rated capacity of the system given in table 4.

Table 4. Range of results from varying hydride bottle diameter.

Hydride Bottle Diameter (mm)	Factor on NiCd Battery	Factor on LiSO ₂ battery Capacity	Total System Mass (kg)	Mass of Hydride Bottle (kg)
41	2.1	0.7	3.70	1.22
50	3.0	1.0	4.27	2.79
65	4.5	1.5	5.27	3.81
82	6.0	2.0	6.37	4.89

Although the system could not satisfy all the design criteria, an analysis of the total electrical capacity that must be carried on patrol did show some advantages with an SPEFC system. Table 5 shows the total system masses (batteries, fuel cell system & spare hydride bottles) that would have to be carried on patrols up to 5 days long¹³. Figure 5 shows the results graphically.

Table 5. Total system masses with SPEFC, NiCd and LiSO₂ batteries.

Days On Patrol	Total SPEFC system Mass (kg)			Excess H ₂ O (kg) or (l)	Battery Mass	
	Bottle dia=41mm	Bottle dia=50mm	Bottle dia=65mm		NiCd kg	LiSO ₂ kg
1	3.70	4.27	5.27	0.12	7.40	1.50
2	4.92	7.06	5.27	0.24	14.80	3.00
3	6.14	7.06	9.08	0.35	22.20	4.50
4	7.36	9.85	9.08	0.47	29.60	6.00
5	8.58	12.64	12.89	0.59	37.00	7.50

All the SPEFC systems were much lighter to carry than the NiCd batteries making as much as 28 kg difference over a 5 day patrol (Table 5). The results (Appendix) also show that the H₂O production is 1.7 times the water requirement for humidification purposes. Consequently, all the SPEFC systems will produce about 120 cc (gms) of potable water per day. However, Fig 5 clearly shows that none of the SPEFC systems using current hydride storage could equal the LiSO₂ battery for energy density.

¹³ Remember, on average, one LiSO₂ and three NiCd batteries must be carried for 36 hours on patrol. This assumes continuous use with a 1:9 receive:transmit ratio.

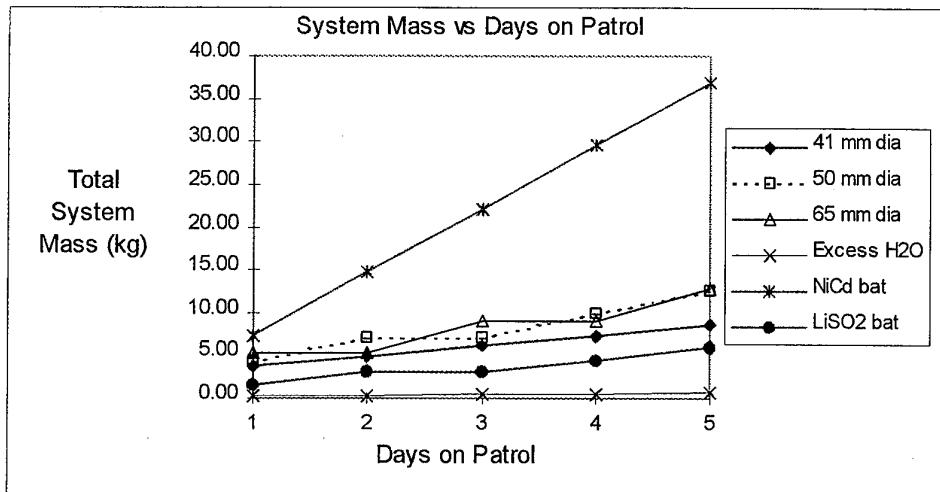


Figure 5. Graph of total system masses versus days on patrol¹⁴.

The costing of the SPEFC system was estimated to be approximately \$2,300 per unit complete with one hydride bottle (see Appendix). Each additional hydride bottle would cost about \$430. However it should be noted that these estimates are based on retail prices and mass production prices would be expected to be significantly lower. However, these prices serve as a first order approximation. Using these cost estimates and costs of the LiSO₂ and NiCd batteries [4] a 5 year costing of the different power systems was performed to yield some insight into the cost considerations (Fig 6).

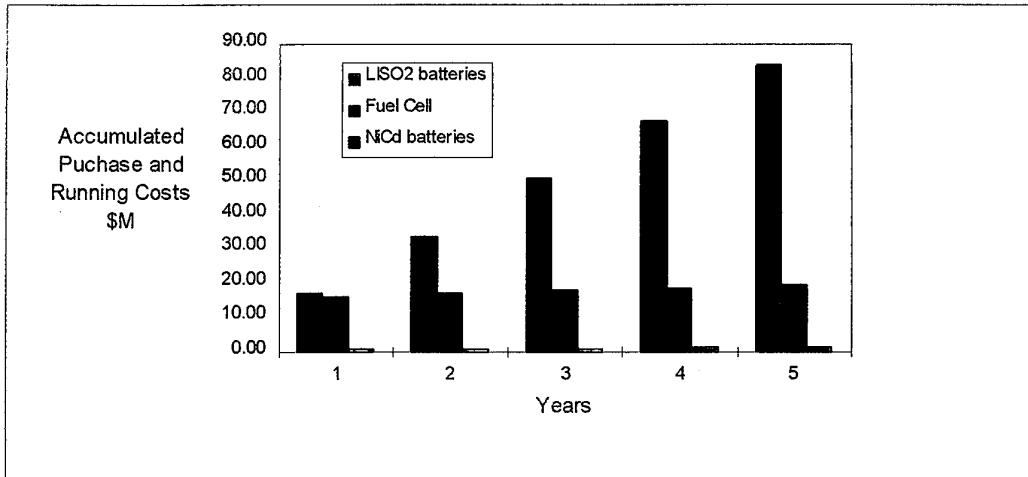


Figure 6. Accumulated running costs of the LiSO₂, NiCd batteries and the fuel cell. Running time was 800 hours/radio/yr and inflation factors were not considered.

¹⁴ The non-linearity of the SPEFC graphs is due to rounding up on the number of hydride bottles that would need to be carried to meet the daily electrical requirements.

The costing (Fig 6) clearly shows that the use of the NiCd batteries provides significant savings over both the fuel cell and the LiSO₂ batteries. However, soldiers on patrol will suffer a large mass penalty using NiCd batteries compared to the other systems (Fig 5). For long patrols where the LiSO₂ offers excellent energy density the operational cost can be very high compared to the slightly heavier SPEFC units where costing is essentially tied to the initial purchase of the units. H₂ consumption costs for the SPEFC system would be under \$800,000/yr and the SPEFC systems would be expected to have long operational lives¹⁵. Nevertheless, analysis of the 5 year costing of the LiSO₂ battery showed that the SPEFC system would be dearer than the LiSO₂ battery if the LiSO₂ batteries were required for less than 150 hours/radio/yr.

One distinct disadvantage with the SPEFC in comparison to a battery system is the need to ensure access to air for operation. Accordingly, any SPEFC system replacement for the Raven battery would require protection against water ingestion. This could be accomplished with a lightweight conformal snorkel along the side of the radio to allow continuous operation when traversing through water.

6. Conclusions

The study has shown that it would be possible to build a SPEFC system using metal hydride storage to replace the NiCd and LiSO₂ batteries. Using conservative estimates of power density and storage capacity the results show that a SPEFC system using hydride storage would be the same size as the 4 Ah NiCd battery and would be able to supply more than twice the useable electrical energy as the NiCd for the same mass. However, it would not be cost effective to replace the NiCd batteries.

At a weight penalty of 2.75 kg over the LiSO₂ and 0.57 kg over the NiCd, the SPEFC system could provide the same energy as the LiSO₂ battery or 3 times the NiCd. Nevertheless, in all the configurations considered, the SPEFC system using hydride storage could not equal the LiSO₂ battery energy density. However, The SPEFC did provide a significant weight advantage over the NiCd battery when multiple day patrols were considered. In addition, the system produced water excess to its requirements providing up to 120 cc of potable water each day. The greatest contribution to the mass of the SPEFC system was the hydride tank which highlights the need for a better chemical storage method for H₂.

¹⁵ Small experimental SPEFC's operating with Nafion 117 have operated for 20,000 hours with individual cell voltages only dropping 0.1 V. Life times studies on recent higher performing membranes have not yet been published.

A SPEFC system will be more complex than a simple battery and accordingly reliability of all associated components, eg. fuel cell, fan, DC-DC converter, electronic control, etc will have to be very high. Other factors that would also have to be investigated would be operating temperature range, system thermodynamics, operation in different orientations, ease of maintenance, ruggedness, etc. Nevertheless, this conceptual study has revealed some insight into the potential to replace traditional battery systems with a solid polymer fuel cell system. The results suggests that alternative chemical methods of storing hydrogen such as sodium boron hydride (NaBH_4) and calcium hydride (CaH_2) should be investigated. Such chemicals will offer a much higher Wh/kg and Wh/cc than hydrides [9] and they may offer systems equal to or better than the LiSO_2 battery with the potential for considerable long term cost savings to the ADF. Further work should also investigate the chemical generation of oxygen rather than using air as the oxidant. Pure oxygen fed to the fuel cell would significantly improve the power density of the fuel cell stack.

7. References

1. Strasser, K.(1994) *PEM Fuel Cell Powerplant as a Powersource of an Air Independent Submarine Propulsion System*. Underwater Defence Technology 1994 Conference, London, England.
2. Skyllas-Kazacos, M and Kazacos, M.(1991) *Australian Defence Forces battery Requirements Part B, Current and Projected ADF Equipment Types and Battery Numbers*. School of Chemical Engineering and Industrial Chemistry. The University of New South Wales, Report Prepared on Behalf Unisearch. NSW. November 1991.
3. Battery Application Manual (1975) Gates energy Products Inc, Gates Rubber Co. Denver Colorado, USA.
4. Private communication (21/2/94) with Derek Brumley. Engineering Development Establishment, Australian Army, Maribrynong, Victoria
5. Powerbox® D.C. Power Supply Catalogue 4th Edition, 1/38 Leighton Place, Hornsby, NSW 2077.
6. Private communications with Mr Robin Pellow of Calorex. 17 Milgate St., Huntingdale, 3167 Melbourne, Victoria.
7. Conflow High Pressure regulator-HP400 supplied by Industrial Pyrometers (Aust) Pty Ltd. Melbourne, Victoria

8. Baumert, R.M. (1993) *Performance Modelling of the Ballard Mark IV Solid Polymer Electrolyte Fuel Cell*. Master of Science Thesis, Queens University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, January 1993.
9. McAlary, G. and Bloomfield, D. (1994) *Fuel Cell Power Systems*. Underwater News and Technology, July/August, 1994.
10. Annex A to RANSLO letter 384/5/79 (17th Mar89) Attached to Report by P.D. Briggs Capt RAN, (April 1989). Fuel Cell Demonstration - Kiel 14 Mar 89.

8. Addendum

Recent developments¹⁶ in PEM fuel cells operating on atmospheric pressure air have demonstrated fuel cell membrane power density increases of 42%- 84% (@ 0.5-0.7 volts) greater than those used in this report. Commensurate with such increased power density is increased power generation efficiency (~43%-59%). Applying this technology to the conceptual design would produce an overall smaller and lighter power unit due to reduced sizes and masses of the fuel cell stack, metal hydride storage and possibly the fan. It may even be possible to remove the DC-DC converter due to potentially less voltage variation from the fuel cell stack thereby producing a much simpler design with higher reliability, lower logistical needs and potentially lower cost.

¹⁶ Appleby, J.A. (1994) Fuel Cells for Traction Applications - An Overview. Proc Fuel Cells for Traction Applications, the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Science, (IVA), Stockholm, Sweden, Feb 8, 1994.

Appendix

Preliminary calculations for a conceptual fuel replacement for Raven batteries.

<i>file:battery.xls</i>					
		<i>length</i>	<i>width</i>	<i>height</i>	
NiCd battery size is	0.218	0.146	0.082	metres	
NiCd capacity is	79	Wh [2]			
LiSO2 capacity is	238	Wh [2]			
Maximum Voltage of either battery is		29.5	volts		
Maximum current drain on either battery is		4.8	Amps		
Normal use is one LiSO2 or 2 NiCd per 36 hrs on Patrol [2]					
H2 Gas Requirement Cal's					
Considering EP fuel cell figures we have 60 l/min at		5	kW on O2 and H2.		
Considering NE105 5L membrane we would get at 75% more power for the same amount of gas.					
We shall only consider NE105 5L		50%	more power with NE105 5L		
<i>Power</i>	<i>Gas Flow</i>	<i>O2/H2</i>		<i>Air/H2</i>	
<i>Output kW</i>	<i>Vf/min</i>	<i>kW/min</i>	<i>On Air, performance is less.</i>	<i>kW/min</i>	<i>H2 consumption</i>
7.5	60	0.125	60%	0.05	
Known performance at ambient pressure for Air/H2.					
Air/H2 at 1/1 atm pressure					
<i>Cell</i>	<i>Current</i>	<i>Power</i>			
<i>Voltage</i>	<i>Density</i>	<i>Density</i>			
<i>Volts</i>	<i>A/cm2</i>	<i>W/cm2</i>			
0.5	0.8	0.4			
0.6	0.6	0.36			
0.7	0.25	0.175			
DC-DC converter efficiency is nominally greater than 85%. We will assume This means we need the fuel cell output to be			80%	0.177	kW

HYDROGEN STORAGE CALCULATIONS			
Hydride/gas bottle will have walls		0.003	metre thick.
Pressure rating based on tensile strength for Stainless Steel of is calculated from thin wall pressure rating formula. pressure=young's mod ² *wall thickness/internal dia			198 MPa
Outside diameter =	0.041	metres	Internal Diameter = 0.035 metres
Max pressure =	34 MPa	OR	4924 PSI
Internal volume of bottle assuming spherical ends =		0.49 litres	
Assumptions			
One third the bottle volume is occupied by gaseous hydrogen and half by the metal hydride.			
Of the two thirds volume for hydride storage only 2/3 of that vol will actually be occupied by the hydride due to heat conductors and packaging of the hydride to allow for expansion.			
HYDRIDE STORAGE			
Hydride:	FeTi	Equivalent Liquid Hydrogen storage factor:	1.3 90% of this was used.
Liquid hydrogen is	845	denser than gaseous hydrogen.	
Volume of Hydride =	0.22 litres		
Volume of hydrogen stored =	215.2 litres (@ STP)		
GASEOUS STORAGE			
Vol of STP Gaseous H ₂ stored under pressure in half the bottle = (Only 60% of Maximum bottle pressure was used.)			32.82 litres
TOTAL HYDROGEN STORAGE =	248.02	litres (@ STP)	
Gas consumption of Unit & Energy Stored in Cylinder			
To obtain output Power we need	3.54 litre/min of H ₂		
Operational time for radio =	70.06 minutes		
kWh for the fuel cell system =	165.35 kWh		
This is a factor of	2.09 times the NiCd battery capacity.		
This is a factor of	0.69 times the LiSO ₂ battery capacity.		

FUEL CELL SIZE CALCULATION					
Maximum width of the fuel cell will be equal to the width of the case - 2*walls- dia of the bottle					
Max Width =	0.095	metres			
Max Height =	0.072	metres			
Allowing	0.005	m wide edges on 2 sides and	0.01	m wide on the other two.	
This gives an active membrane area of		0.085	m wide by	0.052	metre s.
Membrane area =	4.42E-03	metres sq			
Membrane area required for output power					
Cell	Power	Area of membrane			
Voltage	Density	required for output P	Note: All we need here is the total power. The DC-DC converter will transform the output power to the desired 29.5 V able to supply 4.8 A.		
Volts	W/cm2	(cm2)	The DC-DC converter will also limit short circuit current and have thermal overload protection. DC-DC converters also have MTBF of 500,000 to 1,000,000 hrs.		
0.5	0.4	442.50			
0.6	0.36	491.67			
0.7	0.175	1011.43			
Cell	Min No. of Cells		Length of fuel cell will equal the number of cells required plus 1 AND 1/5 and 1/7 of the total number for the humidifier cells. This is using rule of thumb for humidification of a stack.		
Voltage	Cells Required				
Volts					
0.5	10.01				
0.6	11.12				
0.7	22.88				
Cell	Actual No.	No. of Humidifier	Total No. of Plates		
Voltage of Cell	Plates	Plates in Stack			
Volts					
0.5	11	3.77	15		
0.6	12	4.11	17		
0.7	23	7.89	31		

FUEL CELL SIZE CALCULATION (cont'd)

Thickness of cell plates=	0.0025	metres
Thickness of End Plates (2 of)=	0.004	metres

Taking the length and width of the fuel cell and the height of the casing we calculate the volume left in the casing for the DC-DC converter.

Cell Voltage Volts	Length of Fuel Cell Stack (m)	Volume Left in Casing for DC-DC Converter (m ³)	(cm ³)
0.5	0.0455	8.38E-04	837.90
0.6	0.0505	8.04E-04	803.70
0.7	0.0855	5.64E-04	564.30

A review of DC-DC converter technology shows that encapsulated converters have long MTBFs and high transformed energy density. Figures quoted by Powerbox (a manufacturer) are 36 Watts / cubic inch which translates to 2.08W/cc. We use this figure to calculate the volume needed to fit the DC-DC converter and compare it to the available volume. We use the output power figure in the calculation, ie. the equivalent battery power.

DC-DC converter energy density =	2.08	W/cc
Volume required for DC-DC converter =	68.08	cc
Cell Voltage Volts	Room for DC-DC Converter	Free Volume about Converter
0.5	YES	769.82 cc
0.6	YES	735.62 cc
0.7	YES	496.22 cc

WATER BALANCE CALCULATIONS					
<i>Water needed for Humidification:</i>					
Using the RMC equation for the partial pressure of water in 100% saturated gas. We have					
$P(\text{sat}) = (377.4016 - 2.3147 * T - 0.003744 * T^2) / 14.696$					
NB. This equation appears to be only good around 60°C.					
Temp =	60 C=	333.15 K			
P(sat)=	0.20 ATM		This is the partial pressure of the moisture in the 100% saturated gas.		
P(sat)=	19854.28 Pa				
From Ballard results the H ₂ stream must be 50% saturated at the operating temperature and the air must be 100% saturated at the same temperature.					
The amount of water can be calculated from the ideal gas law: PV = nRT					
R=	8.3143 J/KM	P=	1.99E+04 Pa		
T=	333.15 K	V=	0.0001 m ³ =	1 litres	
Moles of water/litre of gas(100% sat)=	0.0007168 moles/litre				
Moles water needed for H ₂ at Max power =	0.012687 moles H ₂ O/min in H ₂ flow at		50%	saturation	
Moles water needed for Air at Max Power =	0.063435 Moles H ₂ O/min in Air flow at		100%	saturation	
HUMIDIFICATION REQUIREMENTS					
Total Moles of water needed at Max Power =	0.07612 moles H ₂ O				
WATER PRODUCTION AT MAX POWER					
H ₂ gas flow at Maximum Power =	3.54 l/min =	0.00354 M ₃ /min			
This gas flow is at a pressure of	1.01E+05 Pa and the temperature is		60	Centigrade.	
Moles of H ₂ at Max Power (from ideal gas law)=		0.129 moles/min H ₂			
Moles Air at Max Power (=5 times required O ₂ flow)=		0.323 moles/min AIR			
Moles of Water produced/min =	0.12908 moles/min				
CONCLUSION:					
H ₂ O production is	Greater	than water requirement for humidification purposes.			
H ₂ O production is	1.70 times humidification needs.				
Excess Water produced =	3.71 moles =	122.44 gms of water/gas storage bottle			
		= 0.122 litres of water/gas storage bottle			

PRELIMINARY COSTING OF COMPONENTS

ITEM				Retail		Density	Estimated
				Price		Kg/cm3	Weight (Kg)
12v DC FAN (40mm*40mm*20mm) : FEC Electronics (287.970)				\$30.00			0.090
Guard for Fan: FEC Electronics				\$5.48			0.005
Particulate Filter for Fan: FEC Electronics				\$0.20			0.001
12 Volt Regulator for powering fan				\$0.25			0.005
Pressure Regulator (HP300) SS316, 10,000 psig from Indust Pyrometers				\$848.00			
Nafion 117 @ \$900 per m2 & considering the 0.5V/cell figures				\$86.18			0.400
Pt for membrane assembly @	\$61.8	per troy oz	0.12	mg/cm2	\$2.11		Estimate
Graphite plates at \$19.869 per Kg	0.0012	Kg/m2					1.64E-05
Graphite and Teflon powder for printing membrane coating (Estimated)		(ESTIMATED)		\$75.00			
End Plates (Fibre re-inforced plastic moulding) at \$5 each (ESTIMATED)				\$3.00			0.003
Fibre glass bolts & nuts				\$10.00			0.051
Teflon Piping and connectors				\$4.00			0.040
Pressure Bottle (based on approx price of Swaglok SS316 bottle)				\$20.00			0.020
FeTiMn Hydride at \$40 per Kg (estimate) &	5.60E+03	Kg/m3		\$350.00			1.000
Quick-fit type connector (Estimated on existing Swaglok mating connectors)				\$48.76			1.219
DC-DC converter (encapsulated and specifically designed for unit) (est.)				\$70.00			0.050
Casing (plastic like existing NiCd battery casing)				\$250.00			3.00E-03
Miscellaneous electrical, electronic and mechanical components				\$10.00			0.150
Assembly and Testing				\$100.00			0.100
				\$400.00			
Total				\$2,312.98			
					Total		3.706 Kg/unit
NOTE: the component costs are retail in most cases.							
Production component costs would probably be 1/3 the retail at least.							
Operating cost per bottle of H2 for unit @	\$17.75	per m3	\$4.38	per fill	OR	\$6.34 per day	
LiSC2 battery which is single use and operates for 1 day costs;						\$133.00 per day	
This means that after approximately 18 days use you break even.							

DEFENCE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA		1. PAGE CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED 2. PRIVACY MARKING/CAVEAT (OF DOCUMENT)		
3. TITLE Conceptual Study on Replacing the Raven Back Pack Radio Batteries with a Solid Polymer Fuel Cell		4. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION (FOR UNCLASSIFIED REPORTS THAT ARE LIMITED RELEASE USE (L) NEXT TO DOCUMENT CLASSIFICATION) Document (U) Title (U) Abstract (U)		
5. AUTHOR(S) Gregory A. Clark		6. CORPORATE AUTHOR Aeronautical and Maritime Research Laboratory PO Box 4331 Melbourne Vic 3001		
7a. DSTO NUMBER DSTO-TN-0014	7b. AR NUMBER AR-009-337	7c. TYPE OF REPORT Technical Note	8. DOCUMENT DATE August 1995	
9. FILE NUMBER 510/207/0293	10. TASK NUMBER ARM 95205	11. TASK SPONSOR Army Scientific Advisor	12. NO. OF PAGES 30	13. NO. OF REFERENCES 10
14. DOWNGRADING/DELIMITING INSTRUCTIONS		15. RELEASE AUTHORITY Chief, Ship Structures and Materials Division		
16. SECONDARY RELEASE STATEMENT OF THIS DOCUMENT Approved for public release				
OVERSEAS ENQUIRIES OUTSIDE STATED LIMITATIONS SHOULD BE REFERRED THROUGH DOCUMENT EXCHANGE CENTRE, DIS NETWORK OFFICE, DEPT OF DEFENCE, CAMPBELL PARK OFFICES, CANBERRA ACT 2600				
17. DELIBERATE ANNOUNCEMENT Announcement of this report is unlimited				
18. CASUAL ANNOUNCEMENT <input type="checkbox"/> YES				
19. DEFTEST DESCRIPTORS Batteries, Fuel cells, Fuel cell electrolytes, Radio equipment, Replacement, Hydrogen storage, Solid polymer electrolyte, Raven, Portable power source, Battery logistics, Battery costs, Fuel cell costs				
20. ABSTRACT <p>A conceptual study has demonstrated the technical possibility of replacing the RAVEN radio batteries with a solid polymer electrolyte fuel cell. The fuel cell would operate on air and stored hydrogen released from a metal hydride. The study revealed that the fuel cell power source offered logistical benefits over nickel cadmium batteries and potential cost savings over lithium sulphur dioxide batteries. The study suggests that methods of chemically generating hydrogen and oxygen should be investigated as they may provide significant increased power and energy density for such fuel cell power systems.</p>				

**Conceptual Study on Replacing the Raven Back Pack
Radio Batteries with a Solid Polymer Fuel Cell**

Gregory A. Clark

(DSTO-TN-0014)

DISTRIBUTION LIST

DEFENCE ORGANISATION

Defence Science and Technology Organisation

Chief Defence Scientist }
FAS Science Policy } shared copy
AS Science Corporate Management }
Counsellor Defence Science, London (Doc Data Sheet only)
Counsellor Defence Science, Washington (Doc Data Sheet only)
Scientific Adviser to Thailand MRD (Doc Data Sheet only)
Scientific Adviser to the DRC (Kuala Lumpur) (Doc Data Sheet only)
Senior Defence Scientific Adviser/Scientific Adviser Policy and Command shared copy)
Navy Scientific Adviser (3 copies Doc Data Sheet)
Scientific Adviser - Army
Air Force Scientific Adviser
Director Trials

Originating Laboratory

Director, AMRL
Chief, Ship Structures and Materials Division
Dr G.R. Johnston
Dr D.R. Brighton
Mr G.A. Clark

DSTO Library

Library Fishermens Bend
Library Maribyrnong
Main Library DSTOS (2 copies)
Library, MOD, Pyrmont (Doc Data sheet only)

Defence Central

OIC TRS, Defence Central Library
Officer in Charge, Document Exchange Centre, 1 copy
DEC requires, as permitted by the release limitations, the following copies to meet
exchange agreements under their management:

- *US Defence Technical Information Centre, 2 copies
- *UK Defence Research Information Centre, 2 copies
- *Canada Defence Scientific Information Service, 1 copy
- *NZ Defence Information Centre, 1 copy

National Library of Australia
The Director, Qinghua University, Beijing
The Librarian, Beijing University of Aeronautics
The Librarian, Institute of Mechanics, Chinese Academy of Sciences
Defence Intelligence Organisation
Library, Defence Signals Directorate (Doc Data Sheet only)

(DSTO-TN-0014)

DISTRIBUTION LIST (Contd)

Army

Director General Force Development (Land)
ABC Office, G-1-34, Russell Offices, Canberra (4 copies)
SO (Science), HQ 1 Division, Milpo, Enoggera, Qld 4057 (Doc Data Sheet only)
NAPOC QWG Engineer NBCD c/- DENGRS-A, HQ Engineer Centre

Navy

ASSTASS, APW2-1-OA2, Anzac Park West, Canberra (Doc Data Sheet only)

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Australian Defence Force Academy
Library
Head of Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering
Deakin University, Serials Section (M list), Deakin University Library, Geelong, 3217,
Senior Librarian, Hargrave Library, Monash University

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

NASA (Canberra)
AGPS

ABSTRACTING AND INFORMATION ORGANISATIONS

INSPEC: Acquisitions Section Institution of Electrical Engineers
Library, Chemical Abstracts Reference Service
Engineering Societies Library, US
American Society for Metals
Documents Librarian, The Center for Research Libraries, US

INFORMATION EXCHANGE AGREEMENT PARTNERS

Acquisitions Unit, Science Reference and Information Service, UK
Library - Exchange Desk, National Institute of Standards and
Technology, US

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

Directorate of Signals-Army, DSIG-A Simpson Barracks, Macleod VIC 3085
Directorate of Electrical & Mechanical Engineers, DMME, MILPO, Bandiana VIC 3694
HQ Special Services, COMD SF, G-1-08, Canberra ACT
Directorate of Command & Control Procurement-Army, DCCP-A, J-2-04, Canberra ACT
Directorate of Combat Net Radio-Army, DCNR-A, APW1-1-22, Canberra ACT
Army Technology Engineering Agency, Mr Graeme Glenn, Principal Technical
Adviser VHF Radio, Private Bag 12, PO Ascot Vale VIC 3032
Energy Partners (Attn. Dr Mariano Nadal), 1501 Northpoint Parkway, Suite 102,
Technology Center, West Palm Beach, Florida 33407, USA
Sustainable Power Systems (Attn. Mr Don Alessi Jr), Suite 19, 3866 Prospect Avenue,
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401, USA
Dr Frank Vermeulen, Afdeling Energie, VITO Boeretang 200, B-2400 Mol, Belgium

(DSTO-TN-0014)

DISTRIBUTION LIST (Contd)

Dr R. Mann, Dept. of Chemistry & Chemical Engineering, Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston, Ontario, Canada (to be posted by Dr G. Johnston)

Dr Robert Rosenfeld, Program Manager, Advanced Research Projects Agency, 3701 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203-1714, USA (to be posted by Dr G. Johnston)

Dr Geoff Gillman, Land Space and Optoelectronics Division, Electronics and Surveillance Research Laboratory, Salisbury, S.A.